



# The Whiskeytown Nugget

The official newspaper  
of Whiskeytown National Recreation Area  
Summer 2002



## Discover all the Wonders of Whiskeytown



**WELCOME TO WHISKEYTOWN**  
National Recreation Area, where you can swim, hike, mountain bike or ride your horse as far as you like. It is a great pleasure to see the park in full operation again following the quiet season of winter. I invite you to explore the park and discover our vast wealth of recreational opportunities, natural resources and cultural history.

Our park staff and the marina concession have been working hard to prepare for this summer season. Our maintenance crews, working with private contractors, have constructed a new water line to serve the Visitor Center. A new fuel spill containment system, and an environmentally friendly vehicle wash-facility have been constructed at Park Headquarters to protect Whiskeytown Lake's water quality. Many interpretive programs are being offered, including tours of the park's California Gold Rush historic sites, campground programs, and ranger-guided kayak tours of the lake.

We have also prepared for another busy fire season by hiring firefighters that will protect the park and our neighboring communities. Whiskeytown's firefighters will also help with fire fighting efforts when needed throughout the United States. During the past winter, we had both private contractors and inmate crews working to construct shaded fuel breaks in strategic locations around the park boundary to reduce the threat of wildfire. The park's natural resource management staff worked through the winter writing an Environmental Impact Statement for the park's new Fire Management Plan.

Since the September 11<sup>th</sup> terrorist attacks in New York and Washington D.C., our National Park Service Rangers have been providing increased law enforcement security for Shasta Dam, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

As a unit of the National Park Service, Whiskeytown offers the public authenticity in both its natural and cultural resources. The park's old growth forest of sugar pine, Douglas fir, and ponderosa pine, provide lovely places for quiet reflection, picnics, and camping. The park has several scenic waterfalls worth hiking to, and miles of cascading mountain streams that provide forest shaded relief from the summer's heat. Black bear, mountain lion, and an abundance of bird life make Whiskeytown their home.

I personally hope you learn something new and interesting about Whiskeytown, but above all, have a safe and enjoyable visit.

*Jim F. Milestone*  
Jim F. Milestone  
Superintendent



Old growth forest at Coggins Park Primitive Camp.

### In This Issue

**TADPOLE DIE-OFF .....PAGE 2**

**SOLAR POWER AT WHISKEYTOWN ..... PAGE 2**

**TH!NK CLEAN AIR .....PAGE 2**

**APPLYING FOR A JOB ..PAGE 3**

**JUNIOR LIFEGUARD PROGRAM ..... PAGE 3**

**WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ..... PAGE 4**

**FIRE! AT WHISKEYTOWN .....INSERT**

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[www.nps.gov/whis](http://www.nps.gov/whis)

## People Making a Difference



Larry DePaul  
Volunteer

**THERE'S A SPECIAL GROUP OF** individuals here at Whiskeytown, about two hundred in all. They come from all over the north state. They contribute over 7500 hours a year helping with the operation of the park. They aren't here for the money. In fact they aren't paid. They come for the inspiring beauty of the area. They come to meet some of the half a million visitors that come here each year. They come for the


camaraderie, and they come to make sure that Whiskeytown is protected and preserved properly. They are part of a 70,000-member program nationwide. These are the people of the "Volunteers in Parks" program.

Volunteers work with the National Park Service staff performing duties vital to the park's operation. The park's Visitor Center is run by a staff of 15 volunteers. They sell merchandise, permits and passes and provide information to park visitors. Other volunteers help by doing various maintenance tasks. Maintenance volunteers

donated over 4000 hours last year. Other volunteers assist park rangers conducting backcountry hikes or kayak tours. Some provide special skills such as photography or scuba diving. There are also those who drive thousands of miles to get here to spend their summer as Campground Hosts. Many of Redding's high schools and scouting groups also provide volunteers for various projects.

Although volunteers aren't paid, they receive plenty of kudos from park employees. Whiskeytown is proud of its volunteer program and makes every effort to ensure that the experience is rewarding and enjoyable. Anyone interested in volunteering is encouraged to contact the park's Volunteer Coordinator at (530) 242-3421.





National Park Service

U.S. Department of the Interior

Whiskeytown National Recreation Area

Dedicated in September 1963 by President John F. Kennedy, Whiskeytown Lake was created as part of the Central Valley Project for the purposes of flood control, irrigation, and power generation. With more than 40,000 acres in a mountain lake setting, Whiskeytown is home to a variety of wildlife.

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Newspaper layout and graphics: Phyllis Swanson

# Marijuana Gardens Linked to Tadpole Die-off



Jennifer Gibson  
Ecologist

IN MAY 2000, HUNDREDS OF BULL-FROG TADPOLES WERE FOUND dead in Whiskeytown Lake. Although bullfrogs are a non-native species that preys on several native animals within the park, the death of these tadpoles still concerned park staff because amphibians like the bullfrog are indicators of water quality and environmental health.

Samples of the dead tadpoles were sent to the National Wildlife Health Center for inspection. Examinations found problems on the skin, and around the gills and mouths of the tadpoles, but no signs of infectious disease. It was determined that an irritant in the water was the most likely cause. Consequently, what was originally thought to be a disease outbreak quickly turned into a water quality concern. However, preliminary lab tests did not show a problem.

Whiskeytown Lake is at the confluence of seven major streams that form one of the largest watersheds feeding the Sacramento River. The National Park Service shares land ownership in the area with the United States Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, timber corporations, and other private landowners. Land use activities that occur outside the park became suspect.

Analysis of one stream led to the discovery of a previously unknown abandoned mine that is associated with the Iron Mountain



Law enforcement rangers eliminated marijuana plantations in and around Whiskeytown in 2001.

Mine Superfund toxic waste site. Iron Mountain is famous for producing the most acidic waters (pH of -3.8) in the world. However, research showed that the tadpole die-off was not caused by acid

mine drainage.

Additional tests suggested that the die-off might have been caused by chemicals found in some fertilizers, herbicides, and oil-based solvents. Park staff wondered if these compounds were from the fire retardant that is dropped from airplanes by firefighters. Pollutants associated with two-stroke engines (MTBE and PAH) were also considered because even low concentrations of these chemicals can cause adverse effects in aquatic animals.

Last year the park discovered that illegal marijuana production was occurring in some remote portions of the park. Rangers raided several of the marijuana gardens confiscating \$10 million worth of marijuana being grown in the park. Chemical fertilizers and other harmful compounds were found in the areas being used to grow marijuana. It is likely that the chemicals washed into the streams feeding Whiskeytown Lake, causing the bullfrog tadpole die-off.

Amphibian populations are declining worldwide. Scientists are currently investigating this problem in several locations across the United States, including several national parks. Possible reasons for this decline include regional pollution, the introduction of non-native species, increased ultraviolet (UV-B) radiation, acid rain, global warming, infectious disease, or possibly a combination of these factors.

Whether the Whiskeytown tadpole die-off is related to other worldwide amphibian die-off events is still unknown. What is clear is that we need to continue, and expand, our monitoring of water quality so that we can better understand the ecological processes going on around us.

## Personal Watercraft Ban Offers Improved Recreational Opportunities

Personal watercraft (PWCs) also known as Jet Skis, Wave Runners and various other brand names are no longer allowed on Whiskeytown Lake. The ban which went into effect April 20, 2002 applies only to Whiskeytown Lake and surrounding creeks. PWCs will continue to be allowed at Shasta and Trinity Lakes. The decision to ban PWCs was based on reducing visitor use conflicts that were identified by the public during the General Management Plan (GMP) process.

Issues of noise, water pollution, safety and incompatible behavior associated with PWCs were common complaints contributing to the decision to discontinue their use at Whiskeytown Lake.

We encourage all park users to continue to enjoy all the other recreational opportunities available at Whiskeytown National Recreation Area, and to explore new recreation activities that provide an "escape from the noise and crowding associated with urban environments".

# Solar Power for Whiskeytown



Jerry Wheeler  
Chief of Maintenance

THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE recently installed a system of solar panels at the Whiskeytown Visitor Center to generate electricity and help reduce the park's utility bills. Solar panels generate electricity without many of the environmental impacts associated with conventional energy sources, and sunlight is a renewable resource that Whiskeytown has in abundance.

The solar panels are capable of producing 3,800 watts of power at the Visitor Center when in full sun. The solar array consists of twenty-four roof-mounted solar panels and eight panels mounted on a tracker that rotates to face the sun as it moves across the sky.

The National Park Service worked with the Bonneville Power Administration to design the solar energy system for Whiskeytown's Visitor Center. The system was installed during a two-day workshop that included representatives from five National Parks, including Whiskeytown National Recreation Area, John Day Fossil Beds National Monument, Lassen Volcanic National Park, Crater Lake National Park, and Redwood National Park. The workshop provided an opportunity for other parks to learn how to work with



New Solar panel at the Whiskeytown Visitor Center.

solar and possibly put the technology to use in their parks.

In addition to providing most of the Visitor Center's electricity needs during the daytime, Whiskeytown's solar energy system is capable of feeding excess electricity back into the main utility grid through two inverters that match the solar power to the grid. This means that Whiskeytown's overall electricity bills will be lower, and that at times when the Visitor Center is generating more power than is being used, the park will see credits, instead of charges, on Whiskeytown's utility bill.

Meters located in the Visitor Center measure how much electricity has been produced overall, and track how much power is sold back to the electricity company. The total cost to install the photovoltaic system was \$19,000 after a \$9,000 rebate from the California Energy Commission. It is estimated that, at current energy prices, the new solar energy system will save taxpayers approximately \$950 a year on Whiskeytown's utility bill. At this rate the system will pay for itself in approximately 19 years. If energy costs rise, the system will pay for itself even sooner.

Stop by the Visitor Center and take a look at one of northern California's newest electricity generating facilities. The solar energy system at Whiskeytown is the first grid intertie system in the National Park Service. Putting solar energy to work is one way that we can all meet our electricity needs today, and improve our health and energy options for the future.

## What do you TH!NK?

The National Park Service recently received new vehicles from the Ford Motor Company that showcase the TH!NK neighbor, a small electric cart that is charged using a standard 120-volt household outlet. Expect to see the new, zero-emission vehicles in use at Brandy Creek and Oak Bottom during future visits to Whiskeytown. These carts will reduce the need to use gasoline-powered vehicles for short trips within the park. This will help reduce Whiskeytown's use of fossil fuels, decreasing carbon dioxide emissions and helping to keep our air clean. This donation was coordinated through the National Park Foundation.





# Applying for a Job with the National Park Service



Rudy Maich  
Personnel Assistant

have the opportunity to actually work for the National Park Service in such stunning settings.

First, you should realize that most of the job openings in the National Park Service

AT ONE TIME OR another, while enjoying the beauties of our National Parks, I suspect more than a few of us have thought, in passing, how wonderful it would be to

that occur during the year are temporary jobs. These jobs are summer jobs, and are limited to a maximum of six months of full-time employment in any twelve-month period. Summer jobs typically available at Whiskeytown include: Law Enforcement Park Rangers, Recreation Assistants (Life-guards), Communications Equipment Operators (Dispatchers), Visitor Use Assistants (Fee Collectors), Motor Vehicle Operators (to clean and maintain grounds and facilities), Laborers (to maintain and repair trails and roads), and Forestry Technicians (Fire Fighters) . Biological Science Technicians are also occasionally hired to assist the

Biologists and Botanists on staff. For high school students between 16 and 18 years of age there is an 8-week summer program called the Youth Conservation Corp (YCC).

Permanent (career) jobs do, of course, become available from time to time, but they are fewer in number and are most often professional in nature [e.g., Park Rangers (Law Enforcement and Interpretation), Administrative Officers, Personnel Officers, Biologists, Ecologists, Resource Management Specialists, etc.], or vocational in nature [e.g., Carpenters, Equipment Operators, Maintenance Workers, Water Treatment Plant Operators, etc.].

There is no longer a specific application form that must be used when applying for a Federal job. A “Federal” version of your resume is acceptable. Instructions on what to include in such a resume can be found in any vacancy announcement.

It is your responsibility to provide documentation or proof of claimed qualifications, education, veterans’ preference, status, and/or verification of eligibility for non-competitive appointment. Take the time to do it right, or you are wasting your time. No exceptions to the rules are given, so make the rules work for you.

Be sure to mail your application package during the “open period” dates given in the Vacancy Announcement to the address given in the announcement. Always keep a copy for your records - your application will not be returned to you. It is a good idea to send your application certified with a return receipt. At the least, get a mailing receipt showing when and to where your application was sent.

Follow these steps, and you will be on your way to a career with the National Park Service!

More information can be found at: <http://www.usajobs.opm.gov/b.htm>, or call the Human Resources Office at Whiskeytown at (530) 242-3403.

## Winning the War on Weeds



Amanda Shufelberger  
Biological Technician

NON-NATIVE PLANTS, ALSO CALLED EXOTIC OR ALIEN, are plant species that have been introduced into an area in which they did not evolve. Many thrive in disturbed areas, such as along roadsides and trails, and usually do not have natural enemies to help control their populations. When this type of plant spreads quickly, or crowds out native plants, we refer to it as an invasive species.

Invasive plants can quickly take over native landscapes, robbing wildlife of

their natural food and shelter. Some of the most troublesome weeds found in Whiskeytown include yellow star thistle, *(pictured at right)* French, Scotch and Spanish broom, tree of heaven and Himalayan blackberry. The National Park Service uses many tools to limit the spread of invasive plants. This includes biological control (insects that are the specific plant’s natural predator), manual removal, mulching, and the use of chemical herbicides. As exotic plants are removed, natives are planted to help restore the natural landscape.



Some examples of native plants found at Whiskeytown can be seen in the planters outside the Visitor Center, including California wild rose, yarrow, Western raspberry, and buckbrush. Common native trees in the area are black oak, ponderosa pine, big leaf maple, live oak and knobcone pine. Beautiful native wildflowers such as California poppies, lupines and purple penstemons can be seen in and around the park in the spring and early summer months.

Wildlife, wind, water, and people spread both native and non-native plants when seeds or plant parts are moved from one area to another. You can help reduce the spread of exotic plants by not taking wildflowers from natural areas, and by checking your shoes and tires for attached plant parts to prevent unintentional transport of exotic species. Many thistles are infamous for transporting themselves by sticking to the bottom of hiker’s boots.

In many places people have deliberately introduced non-native species. A big part of the war on weeds is in your own backyard! Consider planting native species rather than exotics the next time you landscape your yard or update your flowerbed. Many natives are just as easy to grow, require less watering, and can be obtained through the local chapter of the California Native Plant Society. We stand a better chance of winning the war on weeds when we work together.

## Miner’s Cats of Whiskeytown



Sue Kelso  
Volunteer

YOU’VE JUST SPOTTED A RING-TAILED CREATURE at Whiskeytown. You do a double take. It’s not a raccoon. It has white around the eyes and a longer tail. What is it?

This unique looking critter is the Ringtail, also known as the “miner’s cat,” “coon cat”, or civet. The name “miner’s cat” comes from the fact that Ringtails found the rock piles of gold dredging operations to their liking. Early settlers in the southwestern U.S. kept them around their homes as pets and to catch mice.

Although some people call them ring-tailed cats, they are not in the cat family. Some scientists think the Ringtail is so unique that it should be classified in its own family,

Bassariscidae. However, the Ringtail is most commonly included in the Procyonidae family, which includes raccoons and Panda Bears.

Although Ringtails are uncommon in some habitats, they are fairly common in the lower elevations of Whiskeytown. One reason they are seldom seen is because Ringtails are nocturnal, meaning they are most active at night.

The animals are usually found on rocky, brush-covered slopes with blue oak and gray pine. They are never far from water, and are found from sea level up to 6,000 feet in elevation. Just a little larger than a gray squirrel, the Ringtail’s body is a



pale yellowish gray, with a bushy tail encircled by seven incomplete blackish-brown rings and seven whitish ones. Ringtails appear fox-like with a broad head, sharp muzzle, and large ears. Their large eyes are adapted for seeing at night.

The sharp claws of these agile creatures enable them to run up and down trees and scale rough surfaces, allowing them to climb trees to escape danger. When disturbed or upset, the animal makes a coughing bark similar to that of a fox. Ringtails may also whimper or emit a piercing scream.

Ringtails den under rock piles, in caves or crevices along cliffs, and in unused buildings. Three or four young kits are born in May or June. At birth the female feeds them. When the kits are approximately three weeks old the male helps provide food for them. At two

months of age the young kits forage with their parents, and by five months of age their behavior and appearance is similar to that of an adult.

Ringtails hunt lizards, birds, mice, and other small rodents. Acorns, blackberries and the fruit of the madrone and manzanita are also eaten. In the summer and fall, insects form the major part of the Ringtail’s diet. In the winter and spring rodents are the primary food. This provides an important service to people by helping to control rodent populations.

The Ringtail is a protected species in California. However, in some locations they are trapped, although they aren’t particularly popular for their fur. Be sure and keep your eyes open for this interesting nocturnal creature while you’re visiting Whiskeytown.



GENERAL INFORMATION

SERVICES:

Visitor Center:

Located on Hwy 299 and Kennedy Memorial Drive. Open daily during the summer 9 am - 6 pm. Winter hours: 10 am - 4 pm. All permits and passes are available here. A large selection of books and postcards are also available. (530) 246-1225

Park Headquarters:

Open Monday - Friday 8 am - 4:30 pm. Special Use Permits are available here. (530) 242-3400

Radio:

Tune to 1440 on your AM radio for information about Whiskeytown.

Launch Ramps:

There are three boat ramps on the lake, Whiskey Creek, Oak Bottom, and Brandy Creek Marina.

Marinas:

Oak Bottom Marina and Brandy Creek Marina offer boat rentals, gas, food, and fishing supplies (summer only). (530) 359-2027

Snackbars:

Brandy Creek and Oak Bottom swim beaches offer food service during the summer.

Phones:

Phones are located at Oak Bottom (store, marina, and beach), Brandy Creek (beach and marina), Whiskey Creek, and the Visitor Center.

Mail:

Whiskeytown Post Office is located near Whiskey Creek.

Nearby Services:

Old Shasta:

Post Office, J's Market, Mill House Deli.

French Gulch:

Post Office, French Gulch Hotel, E. Franck Bar, French Gulch Store.

Redding

is 8 miles east and has all major services.

Hospitals:

Redding:

Sunset Urgent Care (530) 247-4211, Redding Medical Center - (530) 244-5400, and Mercy Medical Center - (530) 225-6000.

TO REPORT AN EMERGENCY CALL 911

# Ranger Guided Programs

Whiskeytown National Recreation Area offers a variety of Ranger guided activities for everyone from June 15 - September 2, 2002. All programs are subject to change, please check the campground bulletin boards or call the Visitor Center at 246-1225 for the most current information.

**Gold Panning**  
**Thursday through Tuesday 2:30-4:00 pm**  
Discover the myths and realities of the Gold Rush Days, then try your luck at finding gold the old fashion way. Pans and shovels are provided. Meet across the footbridge at the Tower House Historic District.

**Puppet Show**  
**Thursday 8:00-8:45 pm June 20 through August 29**  
Both adults and kids are invited to join a cast of zany characters in a lively and entertaining program about how to safely enjoy Whiskeytown. Meet at Oak Bottom Amphitheater.

**Camden House:**  
**Sunday 4:30-5:30 pm**  
Tour the 1852 home of pioneer/pro prospector Charles Camden and learn how fortunes were made and lost during the California Gold Rush. Meet across the footbridge at the Tower House Historic District.

**Evening Program:**  
**Friday, Saturday, Sunday 9:00- 10:00 pm**  
**Beginning August 9 through September 1**  
**8:30 - 9:30 pm.**  
Join a ranger for a talk, slide show or other activity about the natural, cultural and recreational values that Whiskeytown offers for the enjoyment of present and future generations.

**Junior Ranger:**  
**Wednesday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday 10:00-11:00 am**  
Make new friends while learning about the special wonders of Whiskeytown. If you are between the ages of 7 and 12 ask how you can become a Whiskeytown Junior Ranger. Meet at the Oak Bottom Amphitheater.

**Junior Firefighter:**  
**Saturday 11:00 am-12 noon**  
Discover the role that wildfire plays in our

National Parks. Learn how firefighters manage fire to protect property, lives and ensure forest health. Meet at Oak Bottom Amphitheater or call the Visitor Center at 530-246-1225 on how you can become a Junior Firefighter.

**Walk In The Park**  
**Saturday 9:00 am-1:00 pm**  
Discover the natural beauty and historical values of Whiskeytown while exploring the backcountry with a ranger. Learn how the National Park Service works to preserve and protect these treasures for all to enjoy. Program length and location will vary throughout the summer. Call the Visitor Center at 530-246-1225 for information. Water, hiking shoes and sunscreen are recommended.

**Kayak Tour**  
**Thursday through Saturday 3:00-5:00 pm**  
**Monday through Wednesday 10 am - 12**  
Hop on a kayak built for two and explore some of the more quiet coves around Whiskeytown Lake. Take a peek at the local inhabitants and learn how they manage to live in an ever-changing environment. Register up to one week in advance at the Visitor Center.

**Water Safety:**  
Days and times may vary, check with the Lifeguards on duty for current schedule. Saving someone from drowning depends on quick thinking, common sense, and the ability to use nearby objects. Join National Park Service lifeguards and their Junior Lifeguards for this enlightening water safety demonstration at Brandy Creek Beach.

**Special Programs:**  
Check at the Visitor Center or bulletin boards for other special programs. Programs could include walks, hikes, night programs and more.



The Camden House, one of the many treasures of Whiskeytown.

# Camping at Whiskeytown

Reservations can be made up to five months in advance of your stay at Oak Bottom, Dry Creek, and Whiskey Creek Group Picnic Area, by calling the National Park's Reservation Service at 1-800-365-2267 or using the website <http://reservations.nps.gov>. Overnight campers must also purchase a Daily, Weekly or Annual pass for their vehicle in addition to their campsite fee.

**Oak Bottom Campground** offers \$18.00/night lakeside tent sites, \$16.00/night tent sites, and \$14.00/night RV sites. During the winter season, sites are available on a first-come-first-served basis at \$8.00/night for tent and \$7.00/night for RV sites. Reservations may be made May 15 to September 14.

**Dry Creek Group Tent Campground** offers 2 campsites (tent only) at \$75/site/night. Each has a maximum of 50 people and may be reserved from April 1 to September 30.

**Whiskey Creek Group Picnic Area** offers 3 group day-use picnic areas at a rate at \$40 or \$50 per site depending on which site is reserved. Reservations may be made April 1 to September 30.

**Primitive Tent Campsites** are available only on a first-come-first-served basis at the Visitor Center. Summer rates are \$10.00/night and winter \$5.00/night.

**Brandy Creek RV Campground** offers sites on a first-come-first-served basis. Summer rate is \$14.00/night and winter rate is \$7.00 per night. Permits are available at the campground registration box.



Campsite at Peltier Bridge Campground

## Park Passes

Passes may be purchased at the Whiskeytown Visitor Center. Place pass on the dashboard of driver's side when you visit the park. By purchasing a pass, you are directly contributing to improvements in your park.

**Daily - \$5**  
May be purchased at fee machines at several locations throughout the park.

**Annual- \$20**  
Valid for one year from month of purchase. Also honored at Lassen Volcanic National Park.



**Golden Age - \$10**  
Lifetime pass for U.S. citizens and permanent residents that are 62 years or older.

**Weekly- \$10**  
Valid seven days from day of purchase.

**National Park Pass - \$50**  
Covers all National Parks with entrance fees. Valid for one year from month of purchase.



**Golden Access - Free**  
Lifetime pass for permanently disabled U.S. Citizens and permanent residents.

## Visitor Center now the “One Stop” Permit Center

A pass is required for all day-use visitors to Whiskeytown National Recreation Area. A \$5 Daily Pass, \$10 Weekly Pass, and \$20 Annual Pass are available. Overnight visitors must also purchase a Daily, Weekly or Annual pass for their vehicle in addition to their campsite fee.

All permits, including park entrance passes, golden passes, primitive camping permits and wood gathering permits are now sold at the Whiskeytown Visitor Center. Permits are no longer available at park headquarters. All chain saw inspections for wood gatherers will now take place in the

field, and not at the time of permit purchase. Wood gatherers must have a valid entrance pass in addition to their wood gathering permit, and may collect only dead and down wood.

Reservation holders for the group areas at Whiskey Creek and Dry Creek will also need to check in at the Visitor Center.

The Visitor Center is open daily from 9 am to 6 pm from Memorial Day through Labor Day, and from 10 am to 4 pm the rest of the year.

## Alligators at Whiskeytown?

The northern alligator lizard, *Elgaria coerulea shastensis*, is distinguished by its bright yellow body and slate gray head. This species of lizard is normally found in cool, damp woodlands where it hunts for insects, ticks, spiders (even the poisonous black widow!), scorpions, and millipedes. Unlike most other lizards, the northern alligator lizard gives birth to live young, rather than laying eggs. Although this critter is thought to be very primitive in terms of evolution, it has been recorded as being one of the most intelligent species of its kind. (Jennifer Gibson)

